

VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Montpelier Room, Capital Plaza Conference Center, 100 State Street, Montpelier
February 16, 2010

*The State Board and Department of Education provide support and leadership
in the transformation of the Vermont education system in order to give each learner the opportunity to
succeed in the 21st century.*

Approved MINUTES

Present:

Board Members: Chair Fayneese Miller; Vice-chair Kathy Larsen; Alex Melville; Robert Kelley; Stephan Morse; Brian Vachon; Don Collins; John Hall

DOE: Commissioner Armando Vilaseca; Mark Oettinger; Bart Devon; Jill Remick; Riva Dumont; Rae Ann Knopf; Carol Randall; Barbara Crippen; Heather Gauvin; Susan Marks; Carol Duley; Michael Hock; Gail Taylor; Tina Muncy; John Fischer; Marty Gephart

Others: Winton Goodrich, VSBA; Retta Dunlap; Nicole Mace; Rick Hilton; Jeff Francis, VSA; Peter Hermann, VSBA; Martha Tucker; Amy Cole; Sherry Gile, VTNEA; Rep. Peter Peltz; Jessica Melville; Ken Page, VPA; Tom O'Brien, ANWSU; Martha Allen, VTNEA; Tami Esjberg

Preliminaries

Item A: Call to Order, Pledge of Allegiance

Fayneese Miller, Chair, called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

Item B: Roll Call and Introductions

Board members introduced themselves, as did others in attendance.

Item C: Announcements, Board Member Updates

Chair Fayneese Miller shared that at the last meeting the Board created a commission to study governance as part of the recommendations from the *Opportunity to Learn* document. Suggested appointees have been contacted but the list is not yet finalized. The Board has also formally thanked the members of the Education Transformation Policy Commission for their work.

Miller also shared that she is serving on the National Association of State Boards of Education 21st Century teacher preparation program study group.

Kathy Larsen recently attended a national after school program conference with the Vermont Center for After School Excellence and noted the alignment between that work and the Transformation initiative.

Don Collins noted that the Senate Education Committee will be holding a public hearing on February 24 at the Statehouse regarding redistricting and governance.

Chair Miller reported that she and Commissioner Vilaseca, as well as Brian Vachon, have been testifying and meeting with House and Senate Education committees regarding the Education Finance and Effectiveness Committee's report, as well as Transformation and redistricting.

Stephen Morse asked about the relation between the Board work and the several legislative bills regarding governance currently being discussed. The Board work will continue to move forward, be involved in the process and testify in House and Senate Education Committees.

Item D: Public to be Heard

Nicole Mace of Voices for Vermont Children (VVC) spoke on the organization's recently released report, *Bridging the Gap: Pathways to Success for all Vermont Students*. It incorporates data from the NECAP assessment and focuses on improving outcomes for students who live in poverty. *Roots of Success* provides a roadmap of this work, and they consider this a significant opportunity to improve those outcomes and replicate the systems detailed in the *Roots* work. Another key finding from the VVC report points out the supports needed for struggling families such as early education and care and paid employment leave. Mace distributed copies of the report. Board members asked questions regarding graduation rates, NECAP scores, and other subgroups such as English Language Learners.

Item E: Commissioner's Update

Armando Vilaseca, Commissioner, noted the importance of the work of the VVC, especially in light of the NECAP results that show clear achievement gaps between students on free and reduced lunch and their peers, and boys in poverty who are particularly struggling as a sub group.

Vilaseca spoke about recent legislation on which he has testified that would align all duties at the supervisory union level. This is a minimum step, and some oppose this legislation because it does not go far enough. He feels it is important that, if nothing else happens, at least this change occur.

He also spoke in support of the current work of Addison Northwest SU to redistrict and become a unified union district and board. He continues to participate locally in visits and conversations to meet with SU boards about issues they are facing.

Vilaseca also noted that the department has several positions open for recruitment, which is an exciting opportunity since right now there is a realignment of work teams across the department to move to a statewide system of support.

Chair Miller noted that Commissioner Vilaseca is being well received and has brought good visibility to the priorities of the Board and department.

Item F: Legislative Update

Mark Oettinger, general counsel, spoke to the Board about education-related initiatives and bills currently under consideration in the Legislature. He handed out and walked the Board through a comprehensive list of the current redistricting bills and the pieces under consideration for the miscellaneous education bill. Board members asked questions about provisions in the bill,

incentives for redistricting and what the chances were of education-related legislation coming out of this session.

Action Items

Item G: Consent Agenda

Motion: Larsen moved, Morse seconded, to approve the consent agenda, with comment:

- 1. Minutes of January 19, 2010 SBE Meeting**
- 2. Proposed Revisions to Special Education Rules** (Karin Edwards, Susan Marks, Troy McAllister)
- 3. Ed Flex Waiver Request – Rutland Central SU** (David Baroudi)
- 4. Student Attendance Day Waiver Request (Southwest Vermont SU- Molly Stark Elementary School)** (Mark Oettinger)

The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Item H: Work Session (Rae Ann Knopf and Fayneese Miller facilitated)

Policy Commission Report

Section II: Learning Expectations for a New Generation

The Board reviewed the recommendations of the Policy Commission specific to learning expectations.

Miller stated that she is not in favor of a Learning Expectations Commission, but would rather work directly with the department on this topic. Larsen noted the Policy Commission recommended that one commission member serve on the Learning Expectations Commission. Knopf agreed that the department is actively engaged in this work currently in Vermont and on the national level.

Motion: Morse moved that the State Board will work with the department, consulting with past members of the former Transformation Policy Commission, to develop these learning expectations. Miller noted that the entire report has been accepted so that doesn't require a vote again, but now the Board needs to decide what recommendations to focus on. No vote is required.

Commission member Martha Tucker explained that there were a few main concepts discussed by the commission: non-graded groupings, personalized learning plans and assessments.

The Board also discussed the link with higher education and dual enrollment. Oettinger mentioned that nine of the 11 House Education Committee members were in support of H 709, creating a PK-16 council.

Vermont is participating in the Common Core Standards MOU with other states, which means that Vermont would have to adopt 100 percent of the proposed Common Core Standards and then add an additional twenty percent specific to Vermont. Therefore, whatever the Board decides via the recommendation to revise the current state *Framework of Standards* must align

with this national requirement. The seven-year timeline, (of the commission) doesn't coincide with the current national movements (Race to the Top, Common Core, etc.) in which Vermont is currently involved. Larsen wondered if there are examples already happening in Vermont schools that could better illustrate the tenets of the transformed education. Currently there is no requirement for schools to do this, so Vachon wondered if requirements need to be included in what the Board is discussing, otherwise districts will still not be required to carry out Transformation.

Miller proposed that it is too soon for the Board to discuss sections 5, 7, 8, 9, and that by the next meeting the Board should have some ideas on discussing personal learning plans from the department. Commissioner Vilaseca agreed to bring some ideas on this to the next meeting. Tucker offered to inform the Board and department on the intent of the Policy Commission recommendations and what makes those personalized learning plans different. Tucker will come to the March 16 meeting and talk before the Board on this topic.

Motion: Morse moved, seconded by Vachon, to defer any action on Section II: Learning Expectations for a New Generation until after discussions at the March 16 meeting. The motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Discussion Items

Item J: 2009 NECAP Results (Armando Vilaseca, Gail Taylor, Michael Hock)

Commissioner Vilaseca presented to the Board the recently released 2009 NECAP assessment data. Michael Hock and Gail Taylor also spoke before the Board. There were significant challenges in the Math results and especially for students from poverty. Board members asked questions about the drops in achievement, the issues around Math at the high school level, course rigor, what NECAP means for students and higher education, motivational factors, if the drop is illustrative of a systemic problem with Math education, and where the challenges remain. Hock also explained the online reporting tool from Measured Progress which is available to school administrators.

The Board recessed for lunch.

Fayneese Miller left the meeting and Kathy Larsen took over as chair.

Discussion Items

Item I: New England Secondary School Consortium (NESSC) (Kathy Larsen, Carol Duley, Peter Peltz, Tina Muncy, Amy Cole, Tami Ejsberg)

The group explained to the Board the work the NESSC Working Group is doing and the link between that work and the Board's priorities for transformation. The NESSC is focused on secondary education. The goals are to increase graduation rates, decrease drop out rates, increase college enrollment, and reduce the number of students who need remedial courses. The group is targeting policy change, even analyzing why particular policies were successful or unsuccessful.

Don Collins left the meeting.

Item K: Race to the Top (RttT) Application (Rae Ann Knopf, Anne Lezak)

Rae Ann Knopf and Anne Lezak (grant writer) spoke to the Board about the Race to the Top application. Knopf also presented the Framework document that brings together the different policy work going on across the state and nationally. It includes the Race to the Top, Roots of Success, Opportunities to Learn and DOE restructuring to move this agenda forward.

They walked the Board through the Race to the Top application and how Vermont fares on the various sections. They also showed examples of other state's applications and how Vermont's applications may be received by USDE. Supervisory union and school board leadership will need to sign off on some level of the application. The basic tenet is that the state, in partnership with the LEAs, commits to implementing the transformative assurances of the application. Knopf estimated that between 700 and 1,000 DOE staff hours would be spent between now and June 1st developing the application and working with the field as required. She wants the Board to be aware of the level of commitment, the sometimes incongruity of the USDE work and the Vermont work to transform education, and the realistic chances we have at submitting a successful application. Commissioner Vilaseca reiterated those points. He added that this same conversation needs to be had with the Legislature and the Governor. He recommended that the Board vote at the next meeting, since so many Board members are absent. Morse asked for a sense of the support of partnering organizations and the VTNEA, as well as the Governor, in order to be prepared to vote next month. This was the consensus of the Board.

Concluding and Adjournment

Item L: Future Agendas, Wrap Up and Adjourn (Board members, Armando Vilaseca, Carol King)

Chair Miller was absent, Carol King was absent, but the Board agreed to continue discussing the other sections of *Opportunity to Learn* in addition to Section II. Larsen asked members to review the rest of the sections of the report in order to be prepared to discuss them at the March meeting.

Hall asked for an in-depth discussion on the asset allocation aspect of the redistricting process. Vilaseca agreed to return with some guiding principles on this.

Motion: At 2:44 p.m., Morse moved, Hall seconded, to adjourn the February 16, 2010 State Board of Education meeting. The motion was approved (5-0).

Item M - Written Reports: January 2010 Meeting Summary

Minutes recorded by Jill Remick
Minutes prepared by Carol King